



**2010 Healthy Youth Survey**  
Underage Drinking Results

**March 16, 2011**

Every two years, Washington youth in grades six, eight, ten and twelve at more than 1,000 public schools take the Health Youth Survey. The survey, which is anonymous and voluntary, focuses on attitudes and health risk behaviors around topics such as alcohol, drug and tobacco use, physical activity, and bullying. The results are used to plan, implement, and evaluate state youth programs.

**Underage drinking in Washington**

The Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) is committed to reducing underage drinking, and is pleased to note a downward trend of underage drinking. However, there is more work to be done in order to continue this trend. Key findings in 2010 include:

- The number of students drinking alcohol in the past 30 days continues to decline.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade use dropped to 14 percent – from 16 percent in 2008, and from 29 percent in 1990.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> grade use dropped to 28 percent – from 32 percent in 2008, and from 44 percent in 1990.
- Alcohol use in the past 30 days is more prevalent in higher grades.
  - One out of seven 8<sup>th</sup> graders report drinking, compared to
  - One out of four 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and
  - Nearly one out of two 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Binge drinking by 10<sup>th</sup> graders – defined as five or more drinks in a row - has dropped to 16 percent from 18 percent in 2008.
- More 8<sup>th</sup> graders say alcohol is very hard to get (from 36 in 2008 to 43 percent in 2010).
- Girls in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade were more likely to drink alcohol than boys.
- 87 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 76 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders say most adults in their neighborhood or community think it is wrong or very wrong for kids their age to drink alcohol.
- Since 2008, about 20,000 more youth in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade report that their parents talked to them about not drinking alcohol.
- Most youth get alcohol from friends or at a party, while about 7 percent buy it from a store.

**Underage drinking is a major health concern**

Alcohol use is dangerous to the health and safety of our youth. As studies show parents are the No. 1 influence on whether teens drink, they should talk to their teens about the following risks:

- Alcohol use during adolescence can affect brain development.
- Alcohol-related traffic crashes are a major cause of death among young people. Alcohol use is also linked with drowning, suicide and homicide among youth.

- Those who drink before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol.
- Young people who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.
- Teens who drink are more likely to have problems with school work and school conduct.

### **More work to be done**

The WSLCB will continue to work independently and with other state agencies, organizations, businesses and community groups to reduce underage drinking. The WSLCB is involved in several initiatives, such as:

- Retailer education and enforcement efforts around sales to minors (i.e. compliance checks).
- Board Chair Sharon Foster serves as the Washington State Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (RUaD) co-chair.
- Outreach efforts to increase awareness and prompt positive action, including:
  - An ongoing poster campaign in liquor stores and other public places with the parent-focused message to “Start talking before they start drinking.”
  - Spring/summer TV and radio ads focused on parents and their role in preventing underage drinking.
- “The Power of Parents,” a training program developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), will be offered across the state beginning fall 2011. The program provides tools to help parents talk to their kids about alcohol.

### **WSLCB Mission**

*Contribute to the safety and financial stability of our communities by ensuring the responsible sale, and preventing the misuse of, alcohol and tobacco.*

### **Contact**

Mary Segawa, WSLCB Alcohol Awareness Program Manager, (360) 664-1771 or [mbse@liq.wa.gov](mailto:mbse@liq.wa.gov)